

BEFORE THE ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION

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WILLIAM A. MUNDELL CHAIRMAN

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COMMISSIONER MARC SPITZER COMMISSIONER

IN THE MATTER OF U S WEST COMMUNICATIONS, INC.'S COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 271 OF THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACT OF 1996 ARZONA Corporation Commission

2002 APR -5 P 1: 50 DOCKETED

AZ CORP COMMISSION APR 0 : 2002

DECUMENT CONTROL

Docket No. T-00000A-97-0238

RESPONSE OF THE COMMISSION STAFF TO AT&T'S MOTION TO REOPEN THE RECORD ON CHECKLIST ITEM 7

I. INTRODUCTION

On February 12, 2002, AT&T Communications of the Mountain States, Inc. and TCG Phoenix (collectively "AT&T") filed a Motion to Reopen and Supplement the Record on Qwest Corporation's Compliance with Checklist Item Number 7. AT&T states in its Motion that since the Commission entered two Orders concluding that Qwest has satisfied the requirements of Checklist Item 7, AT&T has experienced a problem updating the E911 database for certain customers who take advantage of the local number portability ("LNP") option. LNP allows a customer to change local service providers while retaining his or her telephone number. Staff files the following response to AT&T's Motion and recommendation for resolution of this issue.

II. BACKGROUND

AT&T states in its Motion that the problem in most of the cases where it is unable to update customer information in the E911 database stems from Qwest's failure to release or "unlock" the number at the time it is ported to AT&T. Comments at p. 2. AT&T states that if Qwest fails to unlock the number, the new carrier ("AT&T") does not have authorization to update information in the database. Id. AT&T goes on to state that the practical effect of this problem is that when the customer places a call to 911, the operator may send emergency service personnel to the wrong location because the customer information in the database is not current. Motion at pp. 2-3. AT&T states that until Qwest implements a process that ensures that it unlocks numbers at the time the

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number is ported to AT&T or any other CLEC, it will continue to endanger customers, place AT&T at a competitive disadvantage and violate the terms of Section 271 of the Act. Motion at p. 4. AT&T further states that such 911 access is necessary both to ensure customer safety and to provide CLECs with a meaningful opportunity to compete against ILECs, such as Qwest. Id.1

AT&T also stated that according to its records in 2001, it received reject messages for more than 1,700 Arizona numbers when it tried to update the ALI database. Motion at p. 5. AT&T alleged that its own investigation revealed that more than 99% of the reject messages received before November 2001 were attributable to Qwest's failure to unlock the ported number in the ALI database. Id. Of these, AT&T stated that more than 1,000 remained locked for over 90 days. Id. In December, 2001, AT&T stated that it received reject messages on at least 569 numbers and as of January 29, 2002, at least 222 numbers ported to AT&T remained locked in the ALI database for more than 30 days. Motion at p. 6.

AT&T states that it is placed at a significant competitive disadvantage because it incurs costs associated with investigating hundreds and hundreds of these messages. Motion at p. 7. AT&T also claims that it is unable to obtain penalties against Qwest because there are no performance measures that evaluate how and when Qwest unlocks access to the ALI database. Id. Additionally, customers who experience problems are likely to blame AT&T and switch back to Qwest as a result. Id.

Qwest filed a Verified Response to AT&T's Motion on February 22, 2002. Qwest stated that it does not dispute the importance of ensuring that 911/E911 services are provided reliably and in a nondiscriminatory fashion. Qwest Response at p. 2. Qwest further stated that based upon records Qwest has obtained from Intrado, AT&T does not have "hundreds" of locked records that it is unable to update. Response at p. 2. Qwest stated that AT&T has only 9 records that are locked to Qwest. Id. Of the total 37 locked AT&T records, Qwest states that roughly 65% are for numbers that have not yet been ported. This occurs when AT&T does not complete the provisioning work for a variety

¹ AT&T explained the problem as follows: "When a customer switches to AT&T for local service and wishes to keep the same telephone number, AT&T feeds appropriate customer information into its internal databases. AT&T uses this information to send an LNP order to Qwest to have the number ported or cutover to AT&T and to send information to Intrado, the company that manages Qwest's Automatic Location Identifier Database ("ALI"). Qwest is then responsible for a series of events, including porting the number to AT&T at a specified time and sending instructions to Intrado to unlock the customer's number so that AT&T can become the "owner" of the customer's 911 record and, in turn, so that AT&T may update the customer's 911 information." Motion at p. 4.

or reasons: i.e., the customer cancelled the order, the customer delayed the due date, or AT&T personnel were unable to complete their provisioning of the service. Id. For four of the locked records, Qwest states that the records are locked to another CLEC, not Qwest. Id. Only 9 records that have been ported are locked to Qwest, and Qwest has asked Intrado to unlock those records. Id.

Qwest also stated that it is in the process of implementing December 2001 draft recommendations of the National Emergency Number Association ("NENA") to address locked records. Id. Qwest further stated that it has contracted with Intrado to implement the NENA-recommended process to unlock Qwest records based on validation in NeuStar's number portability database that the CLEC has activated the number port. Qwest Response at pp. 2-3. Finally, Qwest states that it has demonstrated its commitment to provide 911/E911 services in a reliable and nondiscriminatory manner and is already implementing an industry-recommended process to address locked records. Qwest Response at p. 3.

Qwest also stated that for facilities-based CLECs with their own switching facilities, Intrado has instituted an industry-developed procedure for ensuring that records are not removed from the ALI or E911 database when a customer changes carriers. Qwest Response at p. 4. Instead of removing the customer record when Qwest sends a disconnect, order indicating that an end user has changed service providers, Intrado "unlocks" the record in the ALI database. Id. The new service provider then sends a corresponding connect order to Intrado that "locks" the record and makes the new service provider responsible for the record. Id.

In addition, Qwest states that it has contracted with Intrado to revise the error code process in response to draft industry recommendations. Id. Under the new process, the first time a error code occurs, Intrado will validate that the port has been activated and upon validation, immediately unlock the Qwest record to process the migrate order. Qwest Response at p. 4. Under the new process, only unsuccessful migrates, such as where Intrado finds that the new service provider has not activated the service, will be returned to the new service provider for investigation. Id.

Finally, Qwest states that it is important to understand that the industry process for migratetype orders was designed to ensure that no E911 record is removed from the E911 database if a customer changes carriers. Id. Further the process does not affect an end user's ability to dial 911

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and reach the PSAP for assistance. Id.

In its Reply, AT&T states that its records show that as of February 25, 2002, it has more than 250 numbers that Qwest has failed to unlock. Reply at pp. 1-2. AT&T also stated that Qwest has eliminated consideration of information on 911 database updates for facilities based carriers such as AT&T in the presentation of its data, so that no analysis has been done to determine the scope of this problem. Reply at p. 2. AT&T also claims that chronic unlock problems are still occurring at the rate of about one hundred per month in Arizona. Id. AT&T argues that Intrado's solution is manual, delaying the unlocking of the CLEC's customer's data, is untested, and does not solve the underlying cause of the 911 unlock problem. Id. AT&T claims that the underlying problem is that Owest is not sending a message to unlock the 911 database when a number is ported as it is supposed to do under national standards. In fact, according to AT&T, Qwest waits to send the message for months. AT&T Reply at p. 3. In these situations, AT&T claims that it is not able to change its customers' information in the 911 database, causing potentially life-threatening situations because emergency equipment may be sent to the wrong address. Id. AT&T also claims that Qwest's data severely understates the 911 database problem. AT&T Reply at p. 5. Qwest claims that its data from Intrado shows that only 9 numbers were locked to Qwest, but according to AT&T, Qwest gave no time period for this information. Id. AT&T states that it continues to receive approximately 100 orders with unlock problems every week in Arizona, with a majority of those errors caused by Qwest. Reply at p. 6.

AT&T also states that Qwest's solution has some serious problems. First, it is Qwest's responsibility to send an unlock message. Second, Intrado has no legal obligation to perform this function under Qwest's interconnection agreements, the SGAT, FCC provisions or under the Act. Reply at pp. 7-8. Third, the process Qwest describes is highly manual and adds a delay that Qwest does not experience when it updates the 911 database for its retail customers. Reply at p. 8. Finally, Qwest's proposed method of cleaning up unlock problems has not been tested. Id.

Finally, AT&T states that the two PIDS, DB1-A, Time to Update Databases, and DB-2, Accurate Database Updates, do not accurately capture Qwest's poor performance in failing to unlock the 911 database in a timely manner. Reply at pp. 8-9. AT&T states that Qwest may only be

evaluating its retail results and its performance for CLECs ordering resold services, not facilities based CLEC results. Reply at p. 9.

In its Verified Surreply, Qwest stated that its investigations revealed that it was not Qwest that has failed in its responsibility to unlock records that is causing many of the problems, but it is AT&T's failure to determine the status of its number port activities before it asks for an unlock that has led to many of the errors AT&T receives. Surreply at p. 4. Qwest's investigation indicated that some of the problems were due to the records being locked to another service provider and to AT&T not having completed provisioning of the services. Id. Thus, in many cases Qwest claims it is not at fault. Id.

III. DISCUSSION AND STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff believes that the issue raised by AT&T is very significant and one that must be addressed. Nonetheless, for the following reasons, Staff does not believe that anything would be gained by reopening the record and conducting further proceedings on Checklist Item 7. First, as is apparent from the filings of the parties, this is not just an issue with Qwest. It is a nationwide or industry-wide problem which is being resolved on a nationwide basis by national standard setting groups.

Second, the issue appears to have been addressed in many respects by the national standard setting groups, including NENA and the Local Number Portability Administration Working Group, and Qwest has been proactive in adopting the process agreed upon in those standard setting groups. Qwest noted that in its December 2001 meeting, NENA reached agreement on a draft standard recommendation for handling the unlocking of records by database administrators so that the migrate orders from the new service provider can be handled in a more timely manner. The draft NENA standard is currently in the approval process by the NENA membership. Qwest also pointed out that Intrado has implemented this new process on February 25, 2002. Under the new process, if the new service provider's E911 database update is unsuccessful due to a locked record, Intrado will access the LNP database, to determine if the new service provider has activated the port. If the CLEC has activated the port subscription in the NPAC, Intrado will then unlock the record and process the migrate order to update the E911 database. Intrado has a dedicated team assigned to perform this

function. Staff believes the important point is that Qwest has implemented NENA-recommended processes for addressing record locks/unlocks.

Third, most of the disagreement between AT&T and Qwest appears to have come down to one of "dueling data"; and who is ultimately responsible for the problems experienced by AT&T with 911 database accuracy with ported numbers. It is apparent that the problem is not one that resides solely with Qwest. Qwest's own investigation revealed many problems over which it had no control. For instance, the CLECs may not have ported the number or the records may belong to a carrier other than Qwest, and that other carrier (not Qwest) would then have the responsibility to unlock the number. This is not to minimize Qwest's responsibility to unlock numbers on a timely basis, but merely to point out that the problem is a joint problem between the company that currently owns an account and the company that has won the account. Both companies have to notify Intrado that the number port is taking place. If one fails for some reason, a problem is created.

AT&T expresses serious reservation with the NENA recommendation and agreed upon process. However, the concerns expressed by AT&T are not ones that could be productively addressed in a 271 workshop. AT&T states that Intrado has no legal obligation to perform this function under Qwest's interconnection agreements, the SGAT, FCC provisions or under the Act. Staff notes that it assumes that Qwest has its own separate contractual arrangement with Intrado in which Intrado agrees to perform this function. Notwithstanding, Qwest would ultimately remain responsible to ensure that its numbers are unlocked on a timely basis. Staff does not believe that this issue comes down to one of the proprietary of Qwest contracting with a third party to perform this function; as this is standard operating practice in the industry as a whole. The issue comes down to whether the process with Intrado (which incorporates the new NENA standards) will resolve the 911 locking/unlocking problems now being experienced by the industry as a whole. Staff believes that the new process and new NENA standards will solve a lot of the current problems with locking and unlocking of 911 numbers. The industry has also reached consensus in the NENA that this process will alleviate locking and unlocking issues for all carriers.

Moreover, Qwest stated that it has learned from Intrado that since implementation of its solution, Intrado has investigated the unsuccessful migrates and when valid (i.e., the port activation

is complete), cleared all migrate records submitted each day. Qwest also noted in its Surreply that on March 5, 2002, AT&T informed Qwest during hearings in Minnesota that AT&T had submitted hundreds of numbers to Intrado for unlocking to "test" the Intrado process." According to Qwest, the "test" demonstrated that the Intrado process was indeed working. Thus, Staff believes that AT&T's concerns that the process "Qwest describes is highly manual and adds a delay that Qwest does not experience when it updates the 911 database for its retail customers", and that "Qwest's proposed method has not been tested" do not have merit.

Nonetheless, as a result of AT&T having brought this concern to light, Staff believes that several issues have been raised which merit further review. First, Staff recommends that Qwest's SGAT be revised to incorporate a provision which details the process for Intrado to unlock the Qwest numbers when it is determined by Intrado that the service provider (CLEC) has activated the port. Qwest should be required to propose SGAT language within 10 days which details the process to be used by Intrado and which obligates Qwest and the CLECs to follow and implement future NENA standards pertaining to 911. Qwest should also be required to include such provisions in its interconnection agreements on a going forward basis.

While Qwest has agreed to the NENA process and has contracted with Intrado to implement it, the data also indicated a problem with CLECs which also have numbers locked to them which were not being unlocked on a timely basis. Intrado has agreed to unlock a CLEC's customer records under this process, for no additional charge, if authorized to do so by the CLEC. CLEC authorization should not be a problem with future interconnection agreements where these provisions can be included.

A problem arises however, in that many CLECs are operating under interconnection agreements with no provision of this nature. Staff believes that since a condition is contained in all CC&Ns which obligates the carrier to follow NENA guidelines on 911, this should be sufficient. However, Qwest should notify Staff if Intrado still requires actual CLEC authorization, and Staff will initiate a separate process to address this issue. Staff believes a separate process to address this issue outside of the 271 proceeding is appropriate since this involves the obligations of CLECs.

AT&T also raised an issue regarding the database PIDs not being useful in measuring

Qwest's performance since they only report on Qwest sending the information to Intrado. In general, new PIDs have been addressed in the 271 Test Advisory Group ("TAG"). AT&T is free to raise this issue in the TAG and propose the adoption of a new PID to measure Qwest's performance relative to 911 database accuracy.

Finally, Intrado furnishes a report to all carriers on their performance. The report is required by the SGAT and is entitled "Unsuccessful Migrate Report". The report should furnish information that would indicate if a problem exists and the nature of any problem. Staff believes that the reports produced by Intrado and provided to each CLEC should also be provided to the Commission Staff since a problem may come to light which may need Commission intervention.

IV. CONCLUSION

In summary, Staff recommends that AT&T's Motion to Reopen and Supplement the Record on Checklist Item 7 be denied.

RESPECTFULLY submitted this 5th day of April, 2002.

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